



December 7, 2007

Arlington County Board
Arlington County, Virginia
#1 Courthouse Plaza, Suite 300
2100 Clarendon Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22201

Honorable Paul Ferguson, Chairman

Subject: Updated Resolution Regarding Arlington County's Snow and Ice Policy

Dear Paul:

At the Federation's meeting of December 4, 2007, our delegates approved the attached resolution calling on the County Board to enact and enforce an amendment to the zoning ordinance that would require property owners to promptly clear snow and ice from public sidewalks adjacent to their properties. The resolution also calls upon the County to adopt policies that would ensure that frequently used sidewalks and bike paths on County property are similarly cleared. The resolution passed by a vote of 29-1.

The resolution reaffirms a similar resolution approved by the Federation seven years ago to the day, on December 4, 2000 (also attached and incorporated by reference to the updated resolution). The preamble to the resolution notes that Alexandria and Fairfax County have snow removal ordinances in place, as do communities in snow areas throughout the country. It particularly notes the danger that snow and ice pose for the disabled and the elderly in our community, as well as for children who walk to school. However, the resolution recognizes that not all residents have the ability to shovel snow and ice, and calls upon the County to exempt residents who are physically unable to do so, for health and other reasons, and also to exempt homeowners when they are out of town.

As always, we appreciate the Board's consideration of our views, resolutions and positions. Please feel free to contact me via telephone at: 703-525-8921, or via email at: larrymayer@civfed.org.

Sincerely,

Larry Mayer

Lawrence R. Mayer
President, Arlington County Civic Federation
3108 4th Street North
Arlington, VA 22201-1614

Attachments: Updated Resolution Regarding Arlington County's Snow and Ice Policy
(Passed December 4, 2007)
Original Resolution Regarding Arlington County's Snow and Ice Policy
(Passed December 4, 2000)

CC: Ron Carlee, County Manager
Mike Kerley, Chair – Public Services Committee
Jerry Auten, Chair – ACCF Transportation Committee
Bill Gearhart and Martha Moore – Co-Chairs, ACCF Planning and Zoning
Committee

**Updated Resolution Regarding Arlington County's Snow and Ice Policy
(Passed December 4, 2007)**

Whereas the Arlington county Civic Federation passed a "Resolution Regarding Arlington County's Snow and Ice Policy" on December 4, 2000 (see below), which calls upon the County to adopt and enforce an ordinance that requires owners or tenants of private property to promptly clear sidewalks in the public right of way of snow and ice, and also calls upon the County to take the necessary actions that will ensure that County streets and sidewalks and trails on public property are promptly cleared of snow and ice;

Whereas no action was taken by the County pursuant to the Federation's Resolution of December 4, 2000, purportedly due to perceived difficulties in enforcing an ordinance and in removing snow and ice from public properties;

Whereas neighboring communities and communities throughout the country have adopted and enforce ordinances that require commercial and residential property owners and tenants to remove snow and ice, and also have implemented policies that ensure that snow and ice are promptly removed from public streets and sidewalks and trails on public property;

Whereas snow and ice on sidewalks and streets pose a serious danger to the health and safety of pedestrians and motorists, particularly the elderly and those with disabilities; and

Whereas the County's increased emphasis since 2000 on alternative transportation and on "safe routes" to school for children make the adoption of an appropriate ordinance and policies all the more urgent;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Arlington County Civic Federation reaffirms its resolution of December 4, 2000, and calls upon the Arlington County Board to promptly:

- (a) Adopt a snow and ice removal ordinance and take the necessary actions that will ensure that the ordinance is enforced, and
- (b) Allow for exceptions for residents who are physically unable, and
- (c) Take the necessary actions that will ensure that County streets and sidewalks on public property, including frequently used bike and pedestrian trails, are promptly cleared of snow and ice.

**Original Resolution Regarding Arlington County's Snow and Ice Policy
(Passed December 4, 2000)**

Whereas unsafe walking conditions, sometimes lasting weeks, exist in the county following periods of snowfall forcing persons to walk in the street, drive, or remain snowbound,

Whereas the county encourages citizens to walk or use transit when weather conditions make driving dangerous or difficult,

Whereas current road clearing methods often push snow onto sidewalks, bus stops, and crosswalks,

Whereas many county trails which are used for transportation (e.g., walking to school or Metro), not just recreation, and walkways over bridges, which serve as crucial pedestrian connectors, are left uncleared,

Whereas Arlington, unlike other local jurisdictions such as the Cities of Falls Church and Alexandria, does not require property owners to clear snow and ice from sidewalks adjacent to their property,

Therefore, the Civic Federation resolves that,

Arlington should enable citizens to walk or use transit when weather conditions make driving dangerous or difficult by:

- Enacting a snow ordinance requiring all property owners (business and residential) to clear snow and ice from sidewalks adjacent to their property within a reasonable period of time following snowfall, with an exemption, as permitted by the state, for those persons physically and financially unable to clear snow and ice; and
- Setting an example by effectively clearing snow and ice from the walkways of county facilities including police and fire stations, county offices, and schools; and
- Clearing snow from high-priority trails, walkways, and bridges used by pedestrians, bicyclists and others for transportation; and
- Improving roadway snow clearance by using methods which will not block sidewalks, crosswalks, and bus stops and considering long term solutions such as designing sidewalks with planting strips wide enough to store snow cleared from roads.